

County Profile: Middlesex

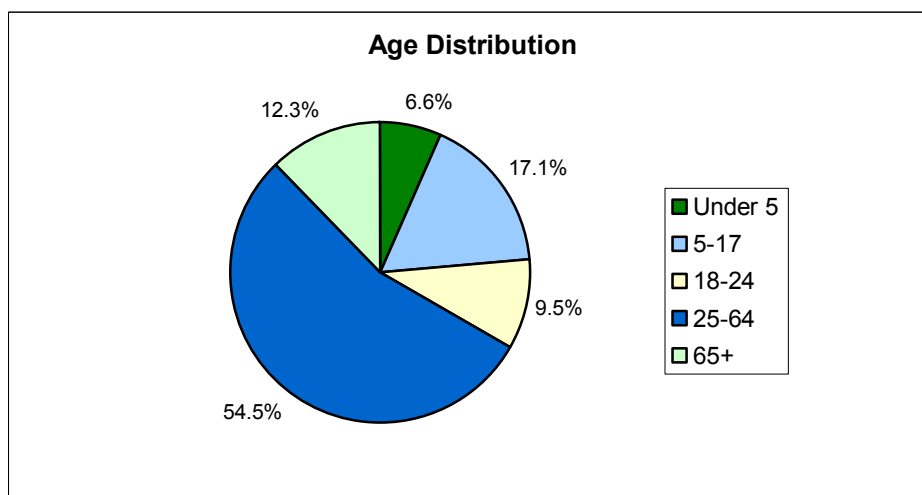


General Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 750,162 individuals reside in Middlesex County's 25 municipalities. These individuals are spread out over a land area of 309.72 square miles, which translates into a population density of 2,422.1 persons per square mile. This makes Middlesex County the 3rd most populous of the state's 21 counties, and the sixth most densely populated county in the state.

At 11.7%, Middlesex County grew more from 1990 to 2000 than the statewide average of 8.9%. Only one municipality experienced a reduction in its population over the past decade. Growth in several suburban municipalities exceeded 40%, including South Brunswick Township at 46.3% (total 2000 population – 37,734) and Plainsboro Township at 42.2% (total 2000 population – 20,215). The county's two largest urban communities, New Brunswick with a population of 48,573 and Perth Amboy with a population of 47,303 experienced more modest growth (16.5% and 12.7% respectively), still exceeding the statewide average.

Middlesex County has 177,628 children under the age of 18. They comprise 23.7% of the county's total population and 8.5% of the state's child population. Middlesex County is ranked third in the state in the number of children. Approximately 64% of Middlesex County residents are of working age (18 through 64), and 12.3% are 65 years and older. The median age is 35.7 years, resembling the median age statewide of 36.7 years. In its age distribution, Middlesex County resembles the state as a whole.



Child Welfare

Middlesex County's portion of statewide child abuse and neglect referrals is less than the proportion of children residing in the county. While 8.5% of all children in New Jersey reside in Middlesex County, 5.6%, or 2,160 of the child abuse and neglect referrals are generated there. The patterns of abuse and neglect differ from the state pattern, with a low percentage of referrals for neglect and higher percentages for all forms of abuse.

Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals in 2001

	Middlesex County		New Jersey	
	N	%	N	%
Physical abuse	878	40.6	12,382	32.0
Emotional abuse	27	1.3	330	0.9
Sexual	129	6.0	2,179	5.6
Neglect	1,055	48.8	22,099	57.1
Multiple types	71	3.3	1,716	4.4
<i>Total</i>	2,160	---	38,706	---
Substantiated rate per 1,000 children	2.7	---	4.0	---
Percent substantiated	22.3	---	21.8	---

In the two Middlesex County District Offices, the active DYFS caseload is 4,194 children and 2,295 families. There are 303 in-state foster homes in Middlesex County. There are 271 Middlesex County children in foster care, which is 3.5% of the 7,807 children in foster care in New Jersey and substantially lower than the percentage of children residing in this county. Of the Middlesex County children in foster care, 62% reside in a different county than their family, which is the second highest percentage in the state and substantially greater than the out-of-county statewide average of 44.6%.

From 1998 to 2002, twelve children in Middlesex County died as a result of abuse and neglect out of a statewide total of 123. One family of these children had an open/active case with DYFS at the time of their death and eight cases were not known to DYFS. The number of all infants who died in Middlesex County in 2000 was 69, 9.5% of the 723 infant deaths occurring in the state. The infant mortality rate of 6.5 deaths under the age of 1 per 1,000 live births was similar to the statewide rate of 6.3.

Child Welfare Outcome Measures

Information on various child welfare outcomes for Middlesex County is presented in the following table. Middlesex County does better in terms of placement stability compared to the national standard. Compared to a national standard of 86.7%, 88.1% of Middlesex children who have been in placement no more than twelve months, have no more than two placements within that time period. In all other areas, Middlesex County does not meet the national standards for child welfare outcomes. Particularly striking is the percentage of children who exit foster care within 24 months, 7.5% compared to a

national standard of 32%. In addition, compared to the national standard of 8.6%, substantially more children in foster care in Middlesex County re-enter care within 12 months of a prior placement.¹ Other indicators are also slightly higher than national standards, including the recurrence of maltreatment in foster care (6.6% vs. 6.1%), and the incidence of abuse and neglect in foster care (.62% vs. .57%). A smaller percentage of children are reunified with a parent or caretaker within 12 months (61%) compared to the national standard (76.2%).

2001 Child Welfare Outcome Measures by County

	Middlesex County	State	National Standard
Recurrence of maltreatment	6.6%	6.4%	6.1% or less
A/N incidence in foster care	.62%	.78%	.57% or less
Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry	61.1%	59.5%	76.2% or more
Re-enter care within 12 months	10.5%	8.2%	8.6% or less
Reduce time in foster care to adoption	7.5%	16.3%	32.0% or more
Increase placement stability	88.1%	86.2%	86.7% or more

Note. Data supplied by DYFS

Definitions

Reduce recurrence of maltreatment – of children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first six months of the reporting period, the percentage who had another substantiated or indicated report within a six-month period.

A/N incidence in foster care – of children who were in foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that was the subject of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member.

Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry – of children reunified with parents or caretakers at time of discharge from foster care, the percentage reunified within 12 months.

Re-enter care within 12 months – of children who entered foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that re-entered care within 12 months of leaving foster care episode.

Reduce time in foster care to adoption – of all children who exited foster care to adoption, the percentage who exited within 24 months.

Increase placement stability – of all children who had been in foster care less than 12 months, the percentage who had no more than two placement settings during that time period.

¹ See definitions that follow for detailed descriptions of the categories presented in this table.

Data Sources

DYFS Approved Foster Homes File, 8/4/03
DYFS Caseload Activity Report (DAR-SISM-5), 8/1/03
DYFS, Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2000
DYFS Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2001
DYFS Foster Care File Extract, 6/6/03
DYFS Statewide Summary of Foster Homes (DAR-PCISM-1), 7/4/03
NJ Substantiated Abuse and Neglect Child Fatality Analysis for 1998-2002, July 2003
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Redistricting Data Summary File, Population for the Counties and Municipalities in New Jersey: 1990 and 2000 (PL1)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Age and Sex (GCT-P5)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Population, Housing Units, Area and Density (GCT-PH1-R)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Quick Table, QT-P2.
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Demographic Profiles, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics (DP-1)

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